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ARE THERE DISTINCTIVE POLITICAL TRADITIONS FOR THE SOUTH?*

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I.

There is a southern aristocratic tradition. Proof of it is to be found in the actual social, economic, political, and intellectual history of the South. There was aristocratic living in the old South. There is a factual basis for the familiar southern stories of cavaliers, chatelaines, chandeliers, mint juleps, magnolias, leisure, travel, enjoyment of the classics, hospitality, good manners, and good and gay living. There was political aristocracy in the South. A land-owning minority generally controlled the southern state governments from the beginnings until near the end of the nineteenth century. Leading southerners in the Convention of 1787 joined some northerners in efforts to fix that sort of rule in the new central government: Pierce Butler and John Rutledge of South Carolina maintained that property, in its stabler forms, was the only just and reasonable standard for representation in Congress: Charles Pinckney of South Carolina and George Mason of Virginia fought for high property qualifications for president, senators, and judges, in order to make property rights secure in the policy of the new nation.¹ The original state constitutions, both northern and southern, confined voting and office-holding to small groups of property-owners;

*This article is the revision of a paper read by Professor Coker at the Louisiana State University Conference on Southern Life and Culture, April, 1939.

¹ *Records of the Federal Convention of 1787*, ed. by Max Farrand, Vol. 1, 533-534, 541-542; New Haven, 1911.

southern states imposed higher restrictions and held on to them longer. In a Virginia constitutional convention, held forty years after the Philadelphia Convention, distinguished leaders—including Chief Justice Marshall, ex-President Madison, and John Randolph of Roanoke—strongly assailed all proposals to liberalize the suffrage and establish a fairer system of apportioning representation; denouncing the threat of rule by “King Numbers,” they succeeded in persuading the convention to make only moderate changes in suffrage and representation.² Most of the southern states subsidized colleges and universities, available only to the well-to-do, before they granted aid to elementary schools; not until after the Civil War did they begin doing very much for public elementary education.

Littérateurs, teachers, preachers, publicists, and savants of the old South offered moral and philosophical defenses of aristocracy. Nathaniel Beverly Tucker, a Virginia novelist and jurist and originally a loyal Jeffersonian, broke away from his democratic faith, after the rise of Jacksonianism, and took up the defense of the southern planter aristocracy against the industrial aristocracy of the North and the “shirt-sleeve democracy” rising in northern and southern frontier regions. One of his novels is mainly a satire and lamentation on the consequences of the new democratic processes, in destroying private chivalry and propriety and public morality and dignity. “The revolution in public sentiment,” he mourned, has “abolished all the privileges of rank and age, . . . trained up the young to mock at the infirmities of their fathers, and encouraged the unwashed artificer to elbow the duke from his place of precedence.”³ “What are our democracies but mobs?” John Pendleton Kennedy, a Maryland author and statesman of Virginia heritage, also wrote a novel to deride the ways of democratic office-holders—their loyalty to party rather than principle, their submission to fluctuating popular majorities, their irrespon-

² *Proceedings and Debates of the Virginia State Convention of 1829-30*, at pp. 42, 59, 62, 66, 159 ff., 219-221, 243, etc.

³ *The Partisan Leader; a Tale of the Future*, 2 vols.; first published (in part) in 1836, under a pseudonym, as a campaign document against Van Buren. The quotations are from Vol. 1, pp. 137 and 187 of the edition of 1856.

sible experimentation to meet passing needs.⁴ The cultivated South Carolina statesman, Hugh S. Legaré, expressed, in this Jacksonian era, his contempt for Jefferson, whom he described as "the holy father in democracy,—the servant of the servants of Demus (whose nose of wax he knew better than anybody how to shape to his own convenience)—the infallible, though ever changing, St. Thomas of *Canting-bury*." Legaré was in Europe (as *chargé d'affaires* at Brussels); and he was disturbed both by his observation of "radical" European measures (notably the passage of the English Reform Bill of 1832) and by the news of the extreme measures of the South Carolina nullificationists. He wrote home:

Mankind have too little sense to maintain, for any length of time, a well-tempered democracy, and a great deal too much to bear an unlimited one. . . . If they have a moderate policy of the kind which happens (as all complicated machines will) to be occasionally a little out of order, their only idea of a remedy is to pull it down, and along with it everything that makes a civil society worthy of its name.⁵

Southern life and thought, in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, was conditioned by the existence of slavery; and defense of the latter increasingly influenced the character of southern aristocratic doctrine. Politicians, preachers, college professors, and social writers, defended slavery on practical, rational, moral, and scriptural grounds; and they made extreme arguments and proposals. Church assemblies proclaimed it to be the divinely appointed mission of southern churches to help the South perpetuate and strengthen the institution of slavery. A Virginia Governor (William B. Giles), a Virginia economist and jurist (Thomas R. Dew of William and Mary College), and others recommended the breeding of slaves in that State, for sale to the cotton States.⁶ A Virginia sociologist (George Fitzhugh)

⁴ *Quodlibet: containing some annals thereof, with an authentic account of the origin and growth of the borough and the sayings and doings of sundry of the towns-people . . .* edited by Solomon Second-thoughts, School-master . . . ; Philadelphia, 1840.

⁵ Hugh Swinton Legaré, *Writings*, ed. by Mary Swinton Legaré Butler, 2 vols., Vol. 1, 208, 210; Charleston, 1845-46.

⁶ See *The Pro-Slavery Argument as Maintained by the Most Distinguished Writers of the Southern States: containing the Several Essays, on*

argued that where there were no Negroes white laborers ought to be enslaved. As the controversy with the North became more intense, the southern defense of slavery broadened into a rejection of the whole doctrine of national rights and human equality and brotherhood. Fitzhugh repudiated both the Virginia Declaration of Rights and the Declaration of Independence as opposed not only to slavery but also to all social order and justice. Men, he argued, are not equal—in abilities, efforts, or rights. The inferiority of the Negro is simply a more conspicuous sign of universal human inequality. Considerations of right, efficiency, and benevolence require the direction and protection of the inferior by the superior members of society. Slavery simply makes that relation more direct, regular, and humane. In a slave society, the property-owner has every reason, economic and sentimental, to take good care of the workers dependent on him for their livelihood. Slaves, said Fitzhugh, “are part of the family, and self-interest and domestic affection combine to shelter, shield, and foster them.” In a “free” society, on the other hand, “the men of property, those who own lands and money, are masters of the poor; masters, with none of the feelings, interests or sympathies of masters; they employ them when they please, and for what they please, and may leave them to die in the highway, for it is the only home to which the poor in free countries are entitled.”¹

The most comprehensive and philosophical theory of aristocracy was set forth by John C. Calhoun. He maintained that even among freemen there are such ineradicable differences in mind and character that property inevitably and properly gets into the hands of the few; and an unequal allotment of political and social power follows rightly the unequal distribution of wealth. The doctrine of natural rights of men to liberty and equality was, Calhoun held, destructive of social order and security; attempts to educate the “poor whites” were a waste of time; and the progress of equalitarian ideas and practices among the lower classes was rushing the country dangerously into some “new and untried

the Subject, of Chancellor Harper, Governor Hammond, Dr. Simms, and Professor Dew; Philadelphia, 1853.

¹ George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South, or the Failure of Free Society*, 46, 233; Richmond, 1854.

condition." Calhoun frankly acknowledged his belief in the necessity of maintaining a social order based on economic and social classes. History, he said, has not shown a single "civilized society in which one portion of the community did not, in point of fact, live on the labor of the other."⁵

Thus the familiar picture of the South as traditionally aristocratic in life, thought, and feeling, has a foundation in authentic history.

On the other hand, the South has a significant place in the American democratic tradition; and this also appears in the actual life of the South as well as in impressive and influential statements of theory. Most of the old-time southerners did not live aristocratically. Obviously, the aristocrats in any aristocratic society are in a minority. They were a very small minority in the South. Moreover, that minority's aristocracy has probably been sometimes over-rated: the English origins of most of the southern aristocrats were middle-class or lower; most of the manor-houses were less than palaces; and accounts of the cavalier's leisure have been somewhat exaggerated. There were far more farmers than planters in the South; there were a good many artisans and craftsmen—millers, black-smiths, wheelwrights, carpenters, masons, cabinet-makers, weavers, dyers; and there were the "poor whites." The ways of living and thinking among the more numerous of the independent members of a community are significant factors of that community's tradition. If it is true that a minority, mainly the large planters, ruled generally in the South for most of the time before the Civil War, and even afterwards until the last decade of the nineteenth century, it is also true that, from the earliest years of political independence, many of the South's most competent and distinguished men (and their ideas and activities are important constituents of a region's tradition) sought to make America generally and the South in particular more democratic. A southern state

⁵ *Correspondence of John C. Calhoun*, ed. by J. Franklin Jameson, *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1899*, Vol. 2, 367, 758. See also his "Speech on the Abolition Petitions" delivered in the Senate on Feb. 6, 1837, and his speech in the same body on the "Oregon Bill," June 27, 1848, in *Works*, ed. by Richard K. Crallé, Vol. 2, 625-633; Vol. 4, 479-512; Charleston and New York, 1851-64.

(Virginia) adopted the first American "Bill of Rights." Three weeks later a southerner wrote the Declaration of Independence; Jefferson and his followers probably believed in that document's self-evident truths concerning equal rights under a government deriving its powers from the consent of the governed (subject, of course, to limitations that are implicit in any abstract formulation of political doctrine intended to obtain some immediate application). The Jeffersonians had genuine and persistent democratic aims. They enunciated them frequently and emphatically and made vigorous efforts to have at least some of them embodied in legislation. "Where else," asked Jefferson, "can one find the origin of *just* power, if not in the majority of society?" In his first presidential inaugural address he proclaimed "absolute acquiescence in the decision of the majority" as "the vital principle of republics, from which there is no appeal but to force." A decade and a half later he denounced his home state government as an oligarchy.⁹ John Taylor wrote long disquisitions in support of the democratic doctrine. Jefferson, Taylor, George Mason, and George Wytke in Virginia, Willie Jones and Nathaniel Macon in North Carolina, Christopher Gadsden, Henry Laurens, Joseph Allston, and Henry Middleton in South Carolina, worked for liberalization of the suffrage and for reorganization of the apportionment of representation in such way as to base representation on the numbers of free inhabitants instead of on taxation and wealth. Under the leadership of these men (most of whom were of the aristocracy) white manhood suffrage was achieved throughout the South (lagging slightly behind the North and West) by the fourth decade of the nineteenth century.¹⁰

The southern democratic leaders realized that if the ordinary citizen is to take an effective part in political decisions and effectively assert his civic rights, he must be in a position to understand both the public's needs and his own rights and duties; and for this he needs education. In other words, they regarded popular education as an essential part of popular government.

⁹ *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. by H. A. Washington, Vol. 8, 10; Washington, 1853-54.

¹⁰ Virginius Dabney, *Liberalism in the South*, ch. 1; Chapel Hill, 1932.

A system of public education, from free elementary school to state university, was a point in Jefferson's four-point program for Virginia in 1776. In 1779 he introduced his "Bill for a More General Diffusion of Knowledge." This was to establish public elementary schools, free to all in the first three years and free to the more capable in the higher grades, and to provide for sending the most capable to William and Mary College for three years at public expense. He tried to have public libraries set up; and he proposed that newspapers be sent free through the mails in order to facilitate the spread of information on civic affairs. The South has generally lagged behind the North in supporting elementary education; but at all times the cause has had eminent and earnest advocates.¹¹

Many of the most distinguished men of the Old South acknowledged that slavery was a contradiction of democracy; some of them saw other evils—moral, economic, and political—in the system. Gradual emancipation was a point in Jefferson's 1776 program; and he introduced a bill to that effect in the Virginia Assembly. He failed in this effort, but two years later he secured the enactment of a statute prohibiting the further importation of slaves into Virginia. In 1784 he sought (in vain) to have the Congress of the Confederation exclude slavery from the Southwest territories. The other three original southern states soon followed Virginia's example in forbidding importation, although South Carolina reversed her position after five years. With economic and social conditions in the South increasingly favorable to slavery, there was not much chance that anything more substantial could be done; but there was a notable southern opposition to the system. A considerable number of owners freed their slaves. Prominent men—such as Governors Bennett of South Carolina and Brandon of Mississippi, William Alexander Caruthers (Virginia novelist), George Tucker (first chairman of the faculty of the University of Virginia), Henry Ruffner (President of Washington College) in Virginia, Professor B. S. Hedrick of the University of North Carolina, Cassius and Henry Clay, and the Rev. Robert Breckinridge in Kentucky—denounced the system. Others, such as the Grimké sisters of

¹¹ See Virginius Dabney, *op. cit.*, chs. 3, 8, 10.

Charleston, Thomas Jefferson Randolph of Virginia, Levi and Vestal Coffin of North Carolina, and James G. Birney of Alabama and Kentucky, carried on an agitation for outright abolition.

Early southern statesmen and philosophers, finally, were perhaps the clearest of any Americans in recognizing that political democracy requires some degree of economic democracy. They believed that in a democratic society there must be property for every one and not too much of it for any one; there could be no genuine democracy where either an impoverished multitude or a small monied group determined public policy. Richard Henry Lee of Virginia, acknowledging that numerous debtor groups had been too much in control of public policy in the period of the Confederation, yet opposed ratification of the federal constitution because he believed it shifted control too far in the opposite direction, serving mainly the interests of a new monied minority. What was needed, he said, was a constitution designed for "men of middling property, men not in debt on the one hand, and men, on the other, content with republican governments, and not aiming at immense fortunes, offices and power."¹² David Ramsay of South Carolina, also opposing ratification, argued that diffusion of property was an indispensable safeguard against political and social tyranny.¹³ Madison himself, in the Philadelphia convention, had warned that a community made up of a few rich and the many propertyless would destroy all chance of republican government; and in the "Federalist" papers he maintained that the presence of opposing social interests arising out of "the various and unequal distribution of property," created the greatest obstacle to a fair and effective operation of republican institutions.¹⁴

The system of primogeniture and entail, prevailing at that

¹² Richard Henry Lee, *Observations Leading to a Fair Examination of the System of Government*, reprinted in *Pamphlets on the Constitution of the United States*, ed. by Paul L. Ford, at pp. 321-322; Brooklyn, 1888.

¹³ David Ramsey, *An Address to the Freemen of South Carolina on the Subject of the Federal Constitution . . .* in the *Ford Pamphlets* (n. 12, *supra*), 379; Charleston, no date.

¹⁴ *The Federalist* (Lodge ed.), No. 10.

period, put substantial limitations upon a wide diffusion of property. The South took the lead in abolishing the system: first Georgia, in 1777; and soon thereafter Virginia, under the leadership of Jefferson and Madison, and South Carolina, led by Charles Pinckney and Edward Rutledge. Jefferson, Madison, and Taylor opposed Hamilton's measures of governmental aid to private finance, commerce, and industry because they believed the policy tended toward a greater concentration of wealth and social power. The new democratic movement of the third quarter of the century, representing the interests of a rising middle class of independent farmers, small merchants and manufacturers, and skilled workmen, was led by Andrew Jackson, a southerner. The movement was in many ways opposed both to the old agrarian aristocracy of the South and to the new commercial aristocracy of the Northeast. Several southern writers recognized that, whatever justification there was for slavery in other respects, it threatened the South with one serious loss—the permanent elimination of yeoman farmers.¹⁵

As already indicated, a landowning minority remained predominant in southern politics until the late nineteenth century. Nevertheless, the activities of more democratic groups during the last half century—Farmers Alliance, Populists, Bryan Democrats, and recent liberal groups of various sorts—in spreading the burden of taxation, expanding public-schools, democratizing higher education, regulating banks, railroads, and public utilities, and introducing other middle-class reforms, should not be regarded as innovations or as consequences of a northern invasion, but rather as revived efforts, adapted to new social conditions, to achieve essentially the same sort of society that Jefferson and his followers planned for the Old South.

Clearly, then, the South has a notable democratic tradition.

II.

There are American traditions of tolerance and of intolerance, and the South has played its part in both. The South took the lead in disestablishing the church; the four original southern

¹⁵ *E.g.*, the novel by William Alexander Caruthers: *The Kentuckian in New York*, New York, 1834.

states accomplished this prior to the meeting of the Philadelphia Convention, whereas several of the New England states held on until several decades later. Southern states were first in abolishing the narrower religious tests for public office. Virginia's tardiness in ratifying the federal constitution, and North Carolina's refusal to ratify (until after the federal government was in operation), were due in considerable measure to dissatisfaction with that document's inadequate recognition of private rights. Jefferson, Madison, and Breckinridge framed the vigorous Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions against the Alien and Sedition Acts. Southern statesmen were the authors of some of our most classic statements on freedom of religion and the press, such as are embodied in the Virginia Declaration of Rights and in many of Jefferson's utterances. "Having banished from our land," Jefferson said in his first inaugural, "that religious intolerance under which mankind so long bled and suffered, we have yet gained little if we countenance a political intolerance as despotic, as wicked, and capable of as bitter and bloody prosecutions." Of the University of Virginia he said: "This institution will be based upon the illimitable freedom of the human mind. For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate error so long as reason is left free to combat it."

On the other hand, the South has, at all periods, made its contributions to a tradition of intolerance. Rawlins Lowndes and Charles Pinckney tried to prevent disestablishment in South Carolina. Patrick Henry, supported by George Washington, John Marshall, and Richard Henry Lee, sought (unsuccessfully) to reestablish the church in Virginia. Southern colleges and universities, in the pre-Civil-War days, put restraints on faculty criticism of slavery; in 1856 the University of North Carolina dismissed a professor because he had announced his intention to vote for Fremont for President, on the slavery issue. Several southern states made it a crime to circulate abolitionist literature. When Darwin's doctrines reached America in the sixties and seventies, prominent church leaders of the South denounced any sort of departure from a strict literal rendering of the Biblical account of creation. Even in the twentieth century there have been dismissals, and respectable attempts at dismissals, of compe-

tent faculty members for independent discussion of the race question and the issues of the Civil War.

The recent South has a peculiarly bad record in the matter of political anti-Catholicism, in some of its public and private dealings with labor-union activities, and in its ecclesiastical and political interferences with freedom of scientific teaching. The large southern vote against the Democratic presidential candidate in the 1928 election was chiefly the product of religious intolerance. Governmental authorities in the South have in some places allowed unlawful and forceful action to be applied against workers engaged in lawful trade-union activities and against tenant farmers and sharecroppers organizing to secure modifications of the conditions of land tenure and of the laws of debt and indenture. In the nineteen-twenties the stronger southern denominations—Methodists and Baptists—took the lead, with followers from other denominations, in a campaign to secure legislation prohibiting, in tax-supported schools, all scientific instruction in biological evolution. Finally, it has taken decisions of the Supreme Court of the United States, within the last few years, to upset certain acts of southern governmental agencies that have transgressed the constitutional guarantees of private rights. That tribunal has had to override an Alabama court decision denying, in effect, the right of the accused to have the assistance of counsel for his defense; a Louisiana statute taxing newspapers having over a designated circulation; a Mississippi murder conviction resting on a confession extorted by torture; an old Georgia statute that, as construed and applied by the Supreme Court of Georgia, punished certain political party activities solely on the ground that documents of the party, not shown to have been exhibited to any one by the accused, advocated an ultimate resort to violence against the government in some indefinite future; and a Georgia city ordinance forbidding the distribution of literature without permission of the city manager.¹⁶

But there is a notable southern record on the other side again. In general academic freedom, the South's record, especially in

¹⁶ *Powell v. Alabama*, 287 U.S. 45 (1932); *Grosjean v. American Press Co.*, 297 U.S. 233 (1936); *Brown v. Mississippi*, 297 U.S. 278 (1936); *Herndon v. Lowry*, 301 U.S. 242 (1937); *Lovell v. Griffin*, 303 U.S. 444 (1938).

the twentieth century, is at least as good as that of any other section of the country. When in 1903 prominent North Carolina journalists, ministers, political orators, professional and business men demanded that Trinity College dismiss Professor John Spencer Bassett because, in an article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, he had called Booker Washington "the greatest man, save General Lee, born in the South in a hundred years," Trinity's president and faculty stoutly defended the right of Professor Bassett to say what he pleased in such matters, whether or not his views were in accord with their own." It would take far too much space to list other like cases and to give some fair illustration of the work of college and university presidents and professors, ministers, other professional men, journalists, business men, and women, who have achieved so much in the South in recent years in upholding freedom in education and the press, and in securing a more tolerant consideration of questions of race relations, labor organization, and social legislation.

Here again, then, there appear to be notable southern traditions on both sides of a great issue in modern political history.

III.

There was a tradition of local self-government in the South. Almost every section of the country has at some time affirmed its faith in the principle of the independent rights of the states. The South asserted its faith the most actively, and for the longest period of time. There is no need here to review the familiar history of the southern "States-Rights" policy—the strong opposition to Hamilton's nationalistic economic policies, the South Carolina nullification movement, the slavery controversy, secession, the Civil War, the post-war opposition to Republican measures of "reconstruction" and high tariffs, and the persistent resistance to any sort of national intervention on the Negro issue. Nor need we review the familiar theoretical defenses of the states-rights position by such men as Calhoun, A. P. Upshur, Alexander H. Stephens, Jefferson Davis, and others. Here again it must be noted that the South has not maintained a steady

"Said President Kilgo (a Methodist minister): "Bury liberty here, and with it the college is buried."

general policy. It has not stood consistently for states-rights, except on issues associated with slavery and the Negro question. In the early days of the nation there was an able Federalist minority in the South. Many southern members of Congress voted for the first tariff measures. Even Calhoun was generally, in his earlier career, a nationalist and loose-constructionist: he supported the tariff of 1816, and, as Secretary of War in Monroe's administration, advocated national expenditures for internal improvements. Legaré defended the United States Bank against Jackson's assaults, and although a bitter opponent of high tariffs, strongly opposed nullification.

Nothing much remains today of a southern states-rights policy, except on the race question and on matters associated with industrial wage-earners. For several decades southerners have been seeking high tariffs to protect the prices of their sugar, citrous fruits, cotton-seed oil, and other products subject to foreign competition; and the South is as alert as any other section in demanding federal subsidies for highways, flood control, power development, and education, and federal intervention in the solution of its farm problems. Even the southern agrarian isolationists call for national aid to preserve the isolated South. Of all regions, finally, the South gave the strongest support to national prohibition. There no longer survives, I believe, any genuine and vigorous southern tradition of constitutional states-rights and political localism.

IV.

Surely there is a strong agrarian tradition in the South. Farmers, for the most part, settled America, in both the North and the South. Generally they remained farmers in the South. A majority of the writers and statesmen of the Old South, both democratic and aristocratic schools, agreed that the South should remain agrarian in order to sustain the region's most worthwhile moral and social values and to preserve somewhere in America a distinctively American way of life. Said Jefferson in 1782:

Generally speaking the proportion which the aggregate of the other classes of citizens bears in any state to that of its husbandmen, is the proportion of its unsound to its healthy parts, and is a good enough barometer whereby to measure its degree of cor-

ruption. While we have land to labor then, let us never wish to see our citizens occupied at a work-bench, or twirling a distaff. . . . For the general operations of manufacture, let our workshops remain in Europe. . . . The mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government, as sores do to the strength of the human body.¹⁸

Three years later he wrote to John Jay:

Cultivators of the earth are the most valuable citizens. They are the most vigorous, the most independent, the most virtuous, and they are tied to their country, and wedded to its liberty and interests, by the most lasting bonds. As long, therefore, as they can find employment in this line, I would not convert them into mariners, artisans, or anything else. . . . I consider the class of artificers as the panders of vice, and the instruments by which the liberties of a country are generally overturned.¹⁹

Jefferson, Madison, Taylor, and R. H. Lee feared that the industrial-aid policy of the national government, in the administrations of Washington and Adams, was undermining popular government and destroying public and private virtue. America, they contended, had gained nothing for popular government by destroying the old landed aristocracy, if by adopting Hamilton's schemes for tariffs, banks, and debt assumption, it was setting up a new aristocracy of finance and industry. They believed, we have seen, that a widely unequal distribution of wealth was incompatible with political democracy, and that only an agrarian society could escape that unequal distribution.

On the other hand, with Calhoun and others representing the dominant political philosophy of the South in the mid-nineteenth century, the preservation of an agrarian society was required as a means not for preserving democracy but for avoiding both the excesses of equalitarian democracy and the cruelties of capitalistic plutocracy. Only in agrarian society could there exist a genuine and humane aristocracy. By the inescapable laws of human society, Calhoun argued, a fine civilization rests upon an exploitation of the naturally incompetent by the competent. That social system is best, therefore, in which the

¹⁸ In his "Notes on Virginia," in *Writings*, ed. by H. A. Washington, Vol. 3, 268-269.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. 1, 403-404.

exploitation is tempered by the humane restraints to which every superior man, of normal sympathies, submits himself when his working life is closely associated, in place and function, with that of his dependents; and this intimate relation between owner and worker (slave or employee) can be maintained only in an agrarian society.

Southern novelists and poets of the mid-nineteenth century contrasted the simplicity, refinement, repose, and comfort of country life with the confusion, vulgarity, restlessness, and sufferings of city life. A Virginian's novel represented northern cities as "mobocracies" composed "principally of wild Irish." A popular poem of a South Carolinian gave sombre pictures of the desolate living conditions of workers in industrial regions—"Driven from the breezy hill, the sunny glade, By ruthless hearts, the drudge of labour made . . . There crammed in huts, in reeking masses thrown, All moral sense of decency unknown." A leading southern sociological work set forth in detail the superior conditions of the rural South, where "all is peace, quiet, plenty, and contentment . . . no mobs, no trade unions, no strikes for higher wages." A later southern poet more talented and realistic, rejecting the old aristocratic tradition of the South, still feared the newer industrial and commercial trend, for he regarded large-scale industry and trade as both inhumane and vulgar.*

Today there are active intellectual and aristocratic groups who believe that the South must remain agrarian in order to remain southern, and that it must keep southern if it is to keep civilized. The South, these groups maintain, is essentially different from the rest of the United States, in physical geography, racial composition, and cultural origins and history; it can remain different only if it holds on to its distinctive traditions and keeps isolated—turning backward, not forward, and inward, not outward. The South, they admit, must accept a moderate amount of industrialization; but it should do so with "very bad grace." It should regard industrialization as "a foreign invasion of southern soil." They see in process in the United States now a "war of

* W. A. Caruthers, *Kentuckian in New York*, Vol. 1, 163; William J. Grayson, *The Hireling and the Slave*, a 1600-line poem, *Preface*, and 23; George Fitzhugh, *Sociology for the South* (note 7, *supra*), 253; Sidney Lanier, "Corn," and "The Symphony."

cultures" between "urban civilization—which is industrial, progressive, scientific, anti-traditional—and rural or provincial civilization—which is on the whole agrarian, conservative, anti-scientific, and traditional." To preserve the latter they would have southern farmers make as many of their necessities as possible and forego many of their luxuries, thereby putting a crimp in the market for highly exploited but intrinsically valueless "comforts" and "benefits." They would reserve general education, on its higher levels, for a superior intellectual minority, to be selected in the secondary schools, and confine advanced education for the others to vocational training in agriculture and the smaller crafts and trades.²¹

These writers, in opposing industry in the name of tradition, have probably given a somewhat exaggerated picture of the peculiarly agrarian history of the South. Various industries flourished in the Old South, and were generally welcomed. Early state legislatures of the South, like those of the North, offered bounties for the encouragement of manufactures. There was a considerable development of cotton textile manufacturing in the South during the first half of the nineteenth century. There were tobacco factories, shoe factories, brass works, iron foundries, paper mills, bagging mills, factories for making guns, coaches, cotton gins, and agricultural implements. Southern newspapers and magazines in that period were at great pains to show the advantages manufactures would bring to the South. There were also important activities in transportation and commerce. The first successful operation of a steam locomotive on rails in the United States occurred in South Carolina; and this state boasted of having the longest railroad in the world. Southern cities, in the first half of the century, were frequently the hosts for national commercial congresses. Charleston, leading center of

²¹ Twelve Southerners, *I'll Take My Stand: the South and the Agrarian Tradition*, New York, 1930; Donald Davidson, "The Trend of Literature," in W. T. Couch, ed., *Culture in the South* at p. 198, Chapel Hill, 1934; Troy J. Cauley, *Agrarianism: a Program for Farmers*, Chapel Hill, 1935; various articles in *The American Review* (1933-37); Herbert Agar and Allen Tate, *Who Owns America?*, chs. 6, 8, 11, 20; Boston and New York, 1936.

southern culture, always struggled assiduously to maintain its importance as a commercial port.²²

In the forties and fifties there was exceptionally earnest and able pamphleteering and practical activity seeking to promote the spread of southern manufacturing. William Gregg (1800-1867), through speeches, pamphlets, and articles in the *Charleston Courier*, succeeded in persuading many of his fellow South Carolinians to build textile mills in order to provide a better market for their cotton and better employment for the numerous "poor whites." His own successfully and humanely managed factory, set up at Graniteville in 1848, supplied a model for many of the later cotton mills of the South. James D. DeBow (1820-67), a native South Carolinian who spent most of his active life in Louisiana, was influential in wider fields of industry and trade, particularly through the articles of his famous "Commercial Review of the South and West" ("DeBow's Review") and in his elaborate compilation surveying the industrial and commercial opportunities in the South.²³ In the later nineteenth century an active campaign for the multiplication of southern manufactures, along with more diversified farming and a generally more laborious and bustling economic life, was carried on by such men as J. H. Lumpkin of Georgia, H. P. Gammett of South Carolina, Walter Hines Page and D. H. Tompkins of North Carolina, and perhaps most notable of all, the Georgia journalist and orator, Henry W. Grady. A steady expansion of industries in the South, since the eighties, has resulted in the present variety of factories—cotton textiles, tobacco, iron, steel, furniture, paper, sugar refining, cotton-seed oil, chemicals, cement, and (in beginning stages) boots and shoes, rayon, celophane, and other products. The latest census showed a higher ratio of urban increase in population in the Southeast than in any other section of the country. The South is making well known

²² Edward Ingle, *Southern Sidelights: a Picture of Social and Economic Life in the South a Generation Before the War*, chs. 3, 4, New York and Boston, 1896; Harriet L. Herring, "Early Industrial Development of the South," in *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 153, 1-10 (1931).

²³ *The Industrial Resources . . . of the Southern and Western States*, 3 vols., New Orleans, 1852-53.

its industrial advantages in raw materials, fuel, water power, building materials, inland water-ways, coastal shipping facilities, railway net-works, cheap and abundant man power, and governmental favors by way of subsidies, tax exemptions, and free factory sites.*

Many able southerners have approved the main results of this industrial development. Prosperous industry, they say, has made possible wider and better educational opportunities, in schools and colleges, public and private; finer roads; and better provision for public health and for the care of dependents. The South, they say, must be industrial as well as agrarian if it is to maintain a standard of living high enough to allow its citizens, in towns or on farms, the means, the time, the capacity, and the impulse to know about, experience, and cultivate, the refined and artistic traits celebrated in the essays, poems, and novels of the southern agrarians.

Recognition of the practical, moral, and cultural values of industry is not new in the South. If some mid-nineteenth century southern writers extolled the quiet country-side, others sang praises to the spindle and the loom. John Pendleton Kennedy wrote and lectured on the advantages of industry. Particularly significant are the eulogies by two of the South's most active and learned statesmen—the South Carolinians, Calhoun and Legaré.

Calhoun, who wanted to keep the South aristocratic and generally agrarian, welcomed the industrial development of the North, both because the wealth and leisure which industry supplied to the superior minority there provided the proper counterpart to the life of the southern aristocracy, and because northern industrialists supplied southern planters with some of

* Broadus Mitchell, *William Gregg, Factory Master of the Old South*, Chapel Hill, 1928; *The Industrial Revolution in the South*, Baltimore, 1930; Henry W. Grady, *The New South*, New York, 1890; Holland Thompson, *The New South*, New Haven, 1919; Edwin Mims, *The Advancing South; Stories of Progress and Reaction*, Garden City, New York, 1926; *The Coming of Industry to the South*, *Annals of American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 153 (1931); B. B. Kendrick and A. M. Arnett, *The South Looks at Its Past*, ch. 4, Chapel Hill, 1935.

the means for the pursuit of culture. "I am no enemy of the manufacturing interest," he said.

On the contrary, few regard it with greater favor or place a higher estimate on its importance, than myself. According to my conception, the great advance made in the arts by mechanical and chemical inventions and discoveries, in the last three or four generations, has done more for civilization and the elevation of the human race than all other causes combined in the same period.²⁵

Legaré made no such regional limitation; and probably no American has sung the praise of industry in more eloquent terms.

I tell you that something far more effective than the school-master, a mightier than Solomon, is abroad. It is the STEAM-ENGINE—in its two-fold capacity of a means of production and a means of transport—the most powerful instrument by far of pacification and commerce, and therefore of improvement and happiness, that the world has ever seen; which, while it increases capital, and multiplies beyond all imagination the products of industry, brings the most distant people into contact with one another. . . . effaces all peculiarities of national character, and promises, at no distant period, to make the whole Christian world, at least, one great family.

Like some of the most agrarian-minded of the present-day southern publicists, Legaré regarded England as the best cultural model for America. He described that country as "the most magnificent manifestation that the world, in any age, has ever beheld, of the might and the grandeur of civilized life." Yet he attributed, in large measure, England's cultural preëminence to the successful development of her commerce and industry. He painted a glowing picture of future America, "crowned with flourishing cities" and guided by a beneficent "credit system"—"the fruit . . . of all that is most precious in civilized life." To quarrel with all that, he believed, was "to be ungrateful to God for some of the greatest blessings He has vouchsafed to man."²⁶

The object of this paper has been simply to help recall the rich variety of the South's heritage of ideas and manners. A knowledge of southern history should make any present-day group

²⁵ *Works*, Vol. 4, 183-184. See also his letter of May 13, 1835, to Abbott Lawrence, Boston manufacturer and capitalist, in *Correspondence*, 654-656.

²⁶ From his speech in the U. S. House of Representatives in opposition to the sub-treasury, *Writings*, Vol. 1, 284-285, 303, 307.

cautious in claiming to be peculiarly the representative of southern tradition. Moreover, it seems possible (unless we must be wholly Marxian in our interpretation of history) that the preservation of worthwhile southern traits is not dependent upon the maintenance of a particular system of production. The South, as has frequently been pointed out, is a region of diversified topography and resources; and it was settled by men of widely varying economic habits and of considerably varied religious and political beliefs. The region is still predominantly agricultural: with all the recent industrial expansion, 68% (in the figures of the latest census) of its population is agricultural, as compared with 44% for the United States as a whole; and it leads in none of the ten major industries of the country. I suppose the South is likely to remain predominantly agricultural for many more decades; but its industries are likely to continue to multiply. It may well be that the South of the near future will offer peculiarly favorable opportunities for achieving the sort of economic society prized by Jefferson, Taylor, and their southern disciples: a society in which a substantial proportion of the people either own the properties on which they earn their living or else have some substantial share in determining the ways in which they earn their living on properties owned by others. A diversification of the South's economic life ought to increase rather than decrease the chances of realizing that traditional southern ideal. In any event the southerner Legaré may have been right, a hundred years ago, in recognizing and accepting an industrial invasion. "It is evidently in the order of nature," he said, "and we must take it with all its good and evils together. The great designs of Providence, in giving to the most active and enterprising of all races a new world to possess, to build up and to adorn, are not to be thwarted by our policy, even if we thought it good policy to thwart them." "

" *Writings*, Vol. 1, 286.